

VIJAYA DHARMA SŪRI.

A Jain Āchārya of the Present Day.

By

Dr. L. P. TESSITORI.

Printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, and
published by the Shri Vriddhichandraji Jain Sabha,
Bhavnagar.

VIJAYA DHARMA SŪRI.

A Jain Āchārya of the Present Day.

IF I were called upon to express my opinion—of whatever value my poor opinion may be—concerning the Jain Āchārya Vijaya Dharma Sūri, I should not hesitate to say that he is the most noteworthy figure of whom the entire Jain community of India may boast at the present day. As a Jain scholar, he has a knowledge of the Jain religious texts which is unrivalled; as a Jain monk he combines in himself the strictest observance of the monastic vows with a liberal interpretation of the spirit of the religion which is unprecedented; as a Jain Āchārya, a preacher, and a propagandist, he possesses a power of argumentation, persuasion, and conciliation, which is marvellous. But the most remarkable of all his accomplishments are his broad-mindedness, which is more like a Western scholar's than a Jain monk's, and his indefatigable activity. Unlike the other monks, who enclose themselves within the narrow circle of their daily religious duties and the company of a few disciples and devout correligionaries, and refrain from any connection with heterodoxes, whom they look upon as impure, impious, and sacrilegious, and whom they would interdict from their temples, their books, and their surroundings, Vijaya Dharma Sūri extends his broad sympathy to all men of all creeds, castes, and nationalities, and is ever ready to learn and accept

from them all that is good and true. As a scholar, he is an admirer of the Western critical method, and the European student of Jainism who undertakes to edit or translate a Jain work always finds the Āchārya ready to help him with the loan of manuscripts and with advice and explanations. His activity, which is more than extraordinary in a country like India, where the people in general are more inclined to drowse and doze than to wake and work, has explicated itself far and wide from the sandy shores of Kathiawar to the green plains of Bengal, and has resulted in the creation of a number of educational and philanthropical institutions such as schools, presses, libraries, and hospitals, in the publication of an important part of the Jain literature which had hitherto remained ignored, in the issuing of periodicals, and, I believe, in the inaugurating of a modern spirit in the Jain social and religious life, which will be continued and the full importance of which will be better realized after a few years. In fact, I do not doubt for a moment that the new tendency initiated by him will be continued. He has surrounded himself with intelligent and zealous disciples who have absorbed from him his broad ideas and his enthusiasm, and are now helping him in his work, and it is only reasonable to presume that when he will be no more, the example set by him will be perpetuated by his disciples and by his disciples' disciples.

Though Vijaya Dharma Sūri is very well known to all Orientalists in Europe whose sphere of work is directly or indirectly associated with Jainism—and he reckons amongst his friends Dr. F. W. Thomas, Prof. H. Jacobi, Dr. J. Hertel, Dr. A. Guérinot, etc.,—yet I am so far the only European who has had opportunities to know him intimately in his own surroundings. I have visited him four times during the last three years, and every time his extraordi-

nary personality has aroused in me more interest and admiration. I have known him as a scholar, I have known him as an orator, I have known him as a monk, and, though he is not permitted to yield to feelings of worldly affection, I think I can say that I have also known him as a friend. In the cells of the *upāśrayas* I have sat by his side listening to his explanations of philological or philosophical difficulties which had been puzzling me; in the open halls of the *dharmāśālās* I have listened to his sermons delivered in Hindi or in Gujarati before a motionless and ecstatic audience, and have admired his simple and yet subtle and forcible eloquence; in the temples, I have been taken by him right before the marble idols and have read with him the Sanskrit inscriptions engraved on their basements. It is to him that I am indebted for having had an insight into the monastic life of the Jains which probably no European ever had before. At Sivganj I have seen him pull off the hair of his chief disciple, Indra Vijaya Upādhyāya; in Udaipur I have seen him consecrate two new monks; in the *dharmāśālā* of Ranakpur, where the evening dusk was fantastically lit up by fires blazing in the courtyard, I have watched him performing the *pratīkramana* with his monks; in the stony forests of the Aravalli I have accompanied him in his *vihāras*, walking by his side in the middle of the cluster of his white-clad disciples; in Kathiawar, I have entered with him the village of Talaja amongst the festoons, the flowers, the scattering of rice, and the *jè jè* s of the entire population, and have made with him the pilgrimage to the sanctuary on the top of the hill, without omitting to visit the ancient Buddhist caves which adorn the sides of the mountain. .

It is a matter of regret, but not of great surprise, that the merits of this extraordinary monk have been better recognized in Europe amongst the

circle of Jainologists and other Sanskrit and Prakrit students, than in India itself. He has been honoured, it is true, by the distinguished title of *Sastraviśarada Jainacharya* conferred on him by the consensus of a large number of pandits from all parts of India, and lately also by his election as an Associate Member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, but this is scarcely all that he deserves and his popularity, though very great amongst the Jains of India, is not such as it ought to be amongst the non Jains. Yet his activity has never been confined to the Jains alone and everyone knows that his Vasovijaya Jaina Patha sala of Benares admits students of all castes and creeds, much as the volumes of his Yašovijaya Jaina Granthamala are sent to all the important libraries and colleges, Jain and non Jain, all over the country. Perhaps the blame for this inadequate recognition of his merits does not so much rest on others as on himself, for just as it befits a monk, Vijaya Dharma Sūri is a humble and unpretentious man, and it is a common experience that honours and popularity do not often fall in lot to those who do not seek or care for them. It will be a cause of some surprise to people in India, to know that Orientalists in France and Italy have taken such an interest in the life and work of the Jainacharya as to feel tempted to write biographical accounts of him in scientific Oriental Journals. Dr A. Guérinot of Paris has done it in the *Journal Asiatique* (xvi, pp 583 ff), and Prof F. Belloni Filippi of Pisa in the *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* (xxiv, pp 165 ff). Not so much in order to follow their example, as in order to do justice to the merits of the man, I propose to give here an account of his extraordinary career, with the help of a biography which is now being published—in Hindi—by Muni Vidya Vijaya, one of the Ācharya's most devout pupils.

Vijaya Dharma Sūri was born of a humble Vaisya

family of the Visā Śrīmālī clan, at Mahuwa in Kathiawar, in the year 1868. His father's name was Rāma Chandra, and his own name Mūla Chandra. The fact that Rāma Chandra had a numerous family—three sons and four daughters—and that Mūla Chandra was the youngest amongst the former, greatly accounts for the comparative neglect in which he was left by his parents since his early boyhood. He grew up like a child of the streets, and when he was big enough to be of some use, his father, instead of sending him to school, took him into his shop to help him in his daily work. So far, Mūla Chandra had had no opportunity to educate himself, nor to develop the seeds of his real vocation which were lurking in the fertile, but uncultivated, soil of his mind. On the contrary, he had been feeling rather a dislike for learning, and his only interest was in gambling, a vice to which he became very strongly addicted even in that early age. But this vice, which would have ruined any other, eventually proved his salvation, for one day, when he had lost a large amount of money, and had been strongly rebuked by his parents in consequence, he began to think of the instability of fortune, the vanity of possession, and the greediness for money which had caused his parents to punish him, and himself to displease his parents. From that day he took an aversion to the world and began to think of the bliss of a life of seclusion. The voice of his vocation had spoken in him, and though many days were still to elapse before his initiation as a monk, yet he had already made his resolution, and every day that passed made him firmer and firmer in it.

At last one day, without telling anybody where he was going to, Mūla Chandra left his paternal house and went to Bhawnagar in search of a preceptor who would give him the happiness he was longing for. The monk Vṛiddhi Chandra was preach-

ing there Mūla Chandra sat before him, and listened to the sermon which had for its subject the verse —

Thou fool who fearest Death, dost thou believe
That because of thy fear Death will thee leave ?
Only him who is never born Death cannot reach
The chain of reincarnation thou shouldst cleave ¹

At the end of the sermon, Mūla Chandra went near the preacher and at once manifested to him his desire to be initiated as a monk. The prudent Vṛiddhi Chandra, considering the young age and the condition of the applicant, refused to comply with his desire and advised him to go back to his parents and obtain their consent. This Mūla Chandra did, and after overcoming all the objections raised by his father and the tears of his loving mother, came back to Vṛiddhi Chandra with his father's consent and was consecrated a monk, under the name of Dharma Vijaya, the 12th of May of the year 1887.

He was then only a young and ignorant boy, and his preceptor could not find any better employment for him but send him to collect alms and fetch water, and utilize him for general menial services. His mental capabilities were so limited at that time, that when at the instigation of his preceptor, he began to study the *Pratīkramana Sūtra*, it took him not less than one and-a-half years to learn by heart two *pratīkramanas*, which is only as much of the text as an ordinary student can easily master in about one month. But his intelligence was not dull, it was only dormant. Stimulated by the example of his preceptor, who was a monk of some learning, Dharma Vijaya soon began to feel ashamed of his ignorance and to desire to be initiated in the study of the Sanskrit and Prakrit literature. Vṛid-

¹ मृत्योर्बिम्बे किं बूढ भोक्तुं मुदति नो यम ।

अजातं नैव मृच्छति कुत्र यममजन्मनि ॥ १ ॥

dhi Chandra was only too glad to foster his pupil's noble desire, and made arrangements for him to learn Grammar under the guidance of a competent teacher. The rapidity with which Dharma Vijaya mastered the *Sārasvata Chandrikā* was simply marvellous considering his slow comprehension, and he himself was astonished at his success, and humbly attributed it all to the merits and ability of his preceptor. From the study of Grammar he passed to that of the *Jaina Sūtras*, the canonical texts of the Jain religion, and the difficult Prakrit in which these are written, proved no stumbling-block to his enthusiasm. Meanwhile, contemporaneously with the progress of his literary studies, another strong liking had grown in the mind of the young monk, a liking for polemics. Vṛiddhi Chandra was a good preacher, and the sermons he was giving before the assembly of the devout Jains, as well as the private disputations he was having with orthodox and heterodox visitors in the *upāśraya*, were deeply engaging the attention and the interest of Dharma Vijaya, who soon began to feel a desire to become a preacher himself, not for any other reason, but simply out of that philanthropical feeling, so characteristically Jain, which had entered his mind since the very day he had assumed the garb of a monk, and has been inspiring his acts and life ever since. What real and invaluable benefits to mankind the power of speech and persuasion can confer in a country where people are too lazy and apathetical to go and try to instruct themselves, and are therefore to be sought, and instructed, and persuaded often against their will; what wonders a man endowed with such a power of speech and persuasion can operate over the ignorant masses by raising them from their secular sluggishness, awakening in them an interest for all that is good and noble, and stimulating them to activity, and at the same time

curing them of their gross superstitions, their petty jealousies, their social prejudices, and thus make them fitter and happier, what a new life into the decaying, but not dying, body of Jainism could a preacher of influence and tact infuse by composing religious differences, spreading a correct knowledge of the principles of the religion itself, and causing the considerable wealth of the community to be spent in charitable institutions of public utility,—Dharma Vijaya realized all this and made up his mind to become a preacher for the benefit of mankind. In this also he succeeded—and in which undertaking would a man of such an enthusiasm and determination not succeed!—and the day when he for the first time addressed the public, was such a triumph that everybody was surprised, including Vriddhi Chandra who had been watching his pupil's marvellous progress and was fully cognizant of the capabilities that were latent in him.

Unfortunately, Vriddhi Chandra was not destined to live long to watch his pupil's rapid career. He died in the year 1893, after a long illness borne with patience and resignation. Some time before his death, he had recommended Dharma Vijaya for the title of *pannyasa*. Now Dharma Vijaya was left without his guide to be himself a guide to others, but he was already fully qualified to be his preceptor's successor. He left Bhawnagar at once and began to wander through the villages and cities of Kathiawar and Gujarat, preaching everywhere. The first *chaturmāsa*, the four months of the rainy season when Jain monks are not allowed to wander about, but are required to halt in one place, was spent at Lāmbri. The *chaturmāsas* of the following years were spent at Viramgam, Kaparvanaj, Sadri (in Marwar), and Patri. While halting at Kaparvanaj, Dharma Vijaya began the study of the *Nyaya Śāstra*, a study which he considerably perfected three years

later during a *chaturmāsa* spent at Mhesana. During his halt at Patri he caused the *firtha* of Upariyala to be restored, and re-established the annual pilgrimage which, owing to difficulties arising from neglect, had long been discontinued. The *chaturmāsa* of the year 1900 was spent in Mahuwa, Dharma Vijaya's native place. Since his consecration as a monk in 1887, he had never been in his native place again. When he arrived there in 1900, he found his father dead, but his mother and his sisters and others of his relatives were still living, and as he entered the village at the head of his monks, they all came with the people of the village to meet him and to reverence him. What mixed feelings of pride and of sorrowful affection must have agitated his mother's breast, when she saw him whom she had given birth to, return in the garb of a begging monk, bare-headed and bare-footed, but triumphant in his humbleness, happy in his destituteness; when she saw all the population of the village crowd the streets and join their hands and bow to that son of hers; when she thought that that son was no longer her son, that she could no longer clasp him in her arms, nor receive him in her house, nor prepare for him a dainty meal, but had to content herself with bowing to him and giving him her alms in his wooden bowl. And who of the villagers would have recognized in that monk of the serene face and saintly appearance, the naughty Mūla Chandra whom they had seen playing in the streets, and climbing trees, and throwing stones, and quarrelling with the other children of the village,—the bad youth who used to sit in his father's shop and cast dice, and gamble, and squander his father's money!

During the four months spent in Mahuwa, Dharma Vijaya consecrated two new monks—the example of his life had not been without efficacy,—and founded a library. Another library he founded at

Viramgam the next year. But by this time a broad design had entered into Dharma Vijaya's mind, and after having well matured it, he thought he must now proceed to put it into execution. Zealous as he had always been of the revival and propagation of the religion in which he was a convinced believer, he had realized that the only road leading to such a revival was through a scientific study of the Jain literature and philosophy, and had thought of founding a College, in which students would learn—besides Sanskrit—Prakrit, the language of the Jain sacred books, which had long been neglected as a language, and almost forgotten. This plan, which he had long cherished, he was first able to put into execution, on a small scale, at Mandal in Gujarat, where with the help of ten scholars he had assembled, he opened in the year 1902 a school, which after the name of the great Jain polygraph of the seventeenth century, Yaśo Vijaya, he called the *Yaśovijaya Jaina Pāthashālā*. But Mandal was not a place where a College on the lines intended by him could prosper, and he soon thought of removing it to a more central place, and selected for it Benares, the traditional seat of brahmanic learning, the heart of Hinduism! It was a very audacious and almost mad idea for a Jain *sādhu* to go and found a Jain college in a country and in a city where Jain monks had not been seen for centuries, and where Jainism was generally unknown, and any attempt to re-import it was sure to meet with the most strenuous opposition. All those, to whom Dharma Vijaya manifested his idea, dissuaded him, and represented to him the difficulties which seemed to render that idea impracticable—how to cross that vast stretch of country barefooted, where to obtain alms, where to find shelter amongst people, determinedly hostile, who had never heard of a Jain monk and who, even if they meant to be kind to them, did not know what

food was fit for them to eat and what not, how to cross the forests and the rivers which barred the road, and after reaching their destination, how to overcome the hostility of the brahmins who would certainly give them no quarter and no rest! It really seemed to be a mad attempt, but Dharma Vijaya was not mad, and his future success proved it. He remained unshaken in his determination, and one day with six monks and a dozen pupils, and no other conveyance but his bare feet and his walking rod, no other luggage but the wooden bowl in his hand, and the bundle of manuscripts on his shoulder, no other guide but his faith, he was seen by the people of Gujarat to set off on the road to Benares.

The difficulties of the road soon grew so great that his followers became disheartened and begged of him that he should turn back. In places, the distance between one village and another was a full day's march, and after they had reached the village, fatigued by the journey, and hungry and thirsty, who was there to give them as alms the pure vegetable food that a Jain *sādhu* is only allowed to take, the strained hot water that a Jain *sādhu* is only allowed to drink? But nothing could shake Dharma Vijaya's faith. He perhaps had before his mind the vision of the first *āchāryas* who were crossing the plains of Hindustan in all the directions to propagate the religion of the Jina, amongst hostile people, in the territories of hostile rulers who would consider them as pernicious heretics and persecute them and even imprison and torture them; he confided in the goodness of his cause, and he went on. Making his way through Rajgadh, Ujjain, Maksiji, Sajapur, Gunan ki Chhawni, Sipri, Jhansi, Kalpi, and Cawnpur, and preaching in all these different places, he at last reached Benares the day of the Aksaya tṛitīyā of Vaiśākha of the year Samvat 1959 (1903 A.D.).

The first days spent in Benares were very trying. The pious Hindus of the place would of course do nothing for the heretical monks who had come from Gujarat, those who knew something about the Jain religion would call them *Mlechchhas* and *nāstikas*, and all would say that they were untouchable and outcasts and should be avoided. With difficulty Dharma Vijaya succeeded in obtaining a shelter in a small dilapidated *dharmaśālā* in Sut Tola, and that wretched building was the headquarters of the Yaśovijaya Jaina Paṭhaśālā for the first nine months. But in the meanwhile a search for a suitable building had been made and this was found at last in the Nandan Sahu Muhalla, where a large building known under the name of Angrejī Koṭhī was on sale. The building was purchased by Vira Chanda Dīpa Chanda and Gokula Bhai Mūla Chanda, two devout seths of Bombay, and presented to the Paṭhaśālā. Here the College rapidly prospered, the number of students rose at once to fifty and sixty, the funds necessary for the upkeep were enlarged by contributions, the facilities afforded to students were increased by the creation of a library named the *Hemachandrācharya Jaina Pustakālaya*, under the care of Dharma Vijaya's first disciple, Indra Vijaya.

But if one were to think that the foundation of the Paṭhaśālā absorbed all Dharma Vijaya's attention whilst in Benares, he would little know of Dharma Vijaya's wonderful activities. Ever since his arrival in Benares, evening after evening, he had been visiting with his monks the most frequented places in the city and had been preaching to the crowd, not with a view to convert any, for he knew the Hindus of to-day to be so blindly obstinate in their inveterate beliefs that not even a miracle in daylight would convert them, but with a view to make the noble principles of the Jain religion known to people who had never heard about them, to

correct their erroneous ideas, to win their sympathies and overcome their diffident and unreasonable hostility, and last but not least, to inculcate in their minds the precept of *ahimsā*, which he believes to be of a universal value and would like to see observed by men of all countries and creeds. His sermons, which were delivered with that forcible and at the same time simple eloquence of which he possesses the mastery, attracted every day more hearers; he soon became the talk of the city, his arguments were discussed by the pandits in their conversations, every one wanted to go and hear him at least for once. One day the Maharaja of Benares sent for him; and he went with his monks and with his students to the Palace, and there before the Maharaja and a circle of pandits who had there assembled, he made a lucid exposition of the Jain religion, showing how the five cardinal precepts of Jainism—do not kill, do not lie, do not steal, do not be greedy, do not fornicate, are the same as those in which the Hindus themselves believe; explaining that the Jains do not teach anything repugnant to the religious susceptibility of the Hindus, nor anything subversive; on the contrary, they teach obedience to the paramount power and respect to all individuals irrespective of station and caste, and pleading that they should also be treated with the same broad tolerance with which they treat others. The Maharaja, though a very orthodox Hindu himself, was so pleased with the foreign monks and with their noble efforts that from that day he began to take a very keen interest in the Pāṭhaśālā and to encourage its growth by all sympathetic means. In this way the fame of Dharma Vijaya rapidly spread, and in the year 1906 he was amongst the savants invited to attend the Sanātana Dharma Mahāsabhā which was to be held on the occasion of the Kumbha Melā at Prayāga (Allahabad). He accepted the invitation,

thinking that it was a good opportunity to speak about the Jain religion and awaken interest in it, and that he succeeded in this is proved by the fact that after the *sabha* the Maharaja of Darbhanga, who was present there, invited Dharma Vijaya to his bungalow and questioned him about the points of difference between Jainism and Buddhism

There is a saying that as waters are good only when flowing, so Jain monks are good only when wandering. All Dharma Vijaya's objects in Benares had been accomplished, and he now thought he must resume his peregrinations and go and sow the peaceful seed of Jainism in other countries. He thought of Magadha (Bihar), the country sacred in history as the cradle of Jainism, the country where Mahavira was born, and preached, and attained omniscience and *mokṣa*, the country which had since been reconverted to brahmanism, and in which, besides a few places of antiquarian interest, nothing more remained to record the ancient faith. What an opportunity for a Jain monk to visit that country, make a pilgrimage to the places sanctified by the life of Mahavira, and re-echo in the air the sound of his words which had long died and gone forgotten! After the rains of the same year 1906, with four monks and twenty students from the Pathasala, Dharma Vijaya left Benares bound for Magadha. At Ara, where he found a few Jains of the Digambara sect, he stopped a few days to preach to them, then he proceeded to Patna. Here he was joined by the other students of the Pathasala and with them all he made the pilgrimage to the Jain *tirthas* of Bihar, Pavapuri, Kundanpur, Rajgahi, Gunaya, Khatrayakund, and lastly Sammetaśikhara (Parswanath Hill), the most sacred of all the *tirthas*, the mountain on which not less than twenty out of the twenty-four Tirthakaras are believed to have attained the *mokṣa*. But he would not stop here. He saw

lying before him the vast country of Bengal where the precept of *ahimsā* was most disregarded, and he would not suffer to turn back without sowing a few words of peace in that virgin soil. Undeterred by the local difficulties, which in Bengal for a Jain monk were greater than anywhere else, and by a varicose trouble which made walking a torture, he continued his journey as far as Calcutta. Here he found a number of devout laymen amongst the Marwari community, but he was not contented with preaching to them; he preached also to the Bengalis, and had the satisfaction to see several babus renounce the eating of fish after his advice. The arguments which he used against his opponents to show that the respect for all forms of animal life is enjoined even by the brahmanic *śāstras*, are embodied in a pamphlet which he wrote in Hindi under the title of *Ahimsādigdarśana*. One argument is very ingenious. To silence those who were trying to justify the sacrifice of goats to the Kālī Mātā with the authority of a passage from the *Durgā Saptaṭī* where it is said that the Mātā should be worshipped with "animals, flowers, and perfumes,"¹ he argued that offering does not mean slaying, and that in the same way as the flowers are offered intact and then thrown away, so the victims should be offered intact and then let loose. In Calcutta he consecrated five new monks from amongst the twenty students who had followed him from Benares, and one of these was Vidyā Vijaya, one of Dharma Vijaya's most distinguished disciples.

Fecund of results as his visit to Bengal had been, Dharma Vijaya realized that these results would be only transitory if the efforts which had brought them about were not continued. The best means to secure a continuation of these efforts was in his

opinion to found a *Gurukula* in some quiet village of Bengal or Bihar, where brahmin students would receive an education imbued with the philanthropical principles of Jainism, and on leaving the school after their training, would carry with them these principles and spread the knowledge of them throughout the country. The idea was perhaps more plausible than practicable, but Dharma Vijaya had already collected the funds necessary for its realization and the *Gurukula* would have risen at Pava, the place sanctified by the nirvana of Mahāvīra if the decaying state of the Yašovijaya Jaina Pāṭhaśālā had not required his immediate return to Benares. Before leaving Bengal, he availed himself of the easy opportunity which the proximity of the place offered him for visiting Nadiya, the town of the celebrated logicians, logic being a discipline in which he is personally well versed and most interested. On reaching Benares, he found his Pāṭhaśālā in a most deplorable condition. During his absence, in spite of the efforts of the teachers, the number of the students had decreased from fifty and over to only five or six. He realized that the disaffection of the students was due to the excessive burden imposed upon them by the contemporaneous compulsory study of disparate and all difficult subjects, and lost no time in remedying the evil by remodelling the entire curriculum in such a way as to allow a certain amount of specialization. The reform was very successful and the Pāṭhaśālā has been flourishing ever since.

One auspicious morning of the year 1908 a large meeting assembled in the premises of the Yašovijaya Jaina Pāṭhaśālā, under the presidency of His Highness the Maharaja of Benares. It was for the purpose of presenting to Dharma Vijaya a *sammāna-patra* signed by over a hundred amongst the most distinguished pandits of Benares, Bengal, and other

parts of India, conferring on him the title of *śāstra-viśārada Jaināchārya* in recognition of his learning and of his propagandist and educational activities. In replying to the addresses read before him on the occasion, Dharma Vijaya emphasized the significance of that honour, not in that it was conferred on himself, as he modestly deemed he did not deserve it, but in that it was conferred on a Jain monk by the consensus of the Hindu pandits of India and under the auspices of a Maharaja who also was a staunch champion of the Hindu faith. Indifferent as he was to personal honours, he could not be indifferent to such an example of tolerance and broad-mindedness, which gave him particular pleasure in that he also was a strong partisan of mutual tolerance and co-operation, and from the very beginning of his career had always endeavoured to bring about a better understanding between Jains and peoples of other caste and creed, and to eliminate the secular barriers of narrow-mindedness which made them diffident and even hostile towards one another. Though a Jain himself, he believed in the educational value of the study of all religions, and admired the broadmindedness of European scholars who with the same impartial benevolence viewed and favoured the study of any religion of the West as well as of the East. In consequence of the title of *āchārya* conferred on him on that day, Dharma Vijaya's name was changed into Vijaya Dharma, by reversing the two terms as is often done in the case of Jain *āchāryas*, and the appendage of *Sūri* was added to it.

Great as his achievements in Benares had been, Vijaya Dharma Sūri did not deem his work in that city completed until he had founded another charitable institution, a *Paśuśālā*, or Animal Hospital, to relieve the sufferings of the poor dumb world to which the Jains extend their feelings of compassion and sympathy. Towards the end of the year 1911

Vijaya Dharma Sūri left Benares to return to Gujarat. His intention was to march slowly, halting all along his route to preach and scatter the peaceful evangel of the Jina wherever it was needed. Passing through Ajodhya, Fejabad, Lakhnau, Cawnpur, Kanauj, Farukhabad, Kayamganj, and Firozabad, he reached Agra just before the rainy season of 1912, and halted there for the four months during which Jain monks are not allowed to peregrinate. It was during this halt that he carried into execution, with some modifications, his plan for a *Gurukula*, which he had first intended to open at Pava, in Bengal. The new institution arose at Palitana, in Kathiyawar, in the form of a boarding school called the *Yaśovijaya Jaina Gurukula*. Supported by generous contributions of charitable seths, the new school prospered very rapidly, and the very first year gave admission to about sixty pupils. In Agra itself, Vijaya Dharma Sūri, with the financial help of Lakṣmī Chanda, a local seth, caused a Jain Library to be started and a Free Dispensary to be opened.

The rains over, Vijaya Dharma Sūri continued his journey through Mathura, Brindavan, Bharatpur, Jaipur, Ajmer, and Byawar. In the last-mentioned place he halted for the *chaturmāsa* of the year 1913, and devoted a good part of his time to trying to bring back to orthodox Jainism the schismatic sects of the Sthānakavāsīs and the Terāpanthīs, which in Byawar are largely represented. Leaving Byawar after the rains, he entered into southern Marwar. The sight of the scattered ruins of ancient Jain temples and of old Jain libraries left a prey to white ants and mice in that country where formerly Jainism was very prevalent and very flourishing, must have been very grievous to his heart. Being an archæologist and a philologist himself, he was naturally led to deplore that state of things, which had its roots in the apathy and ignorance of the inhabi-

tants, and to ask himself what could he done to awaken some interest in the relics and productions of a glorious past that were thus allowed to decay and rot in neglect. Just about that time Professor Hermann Jacobi, the most distinguished student of Jainism living, who had been connected with Vijaya Dharma Sūri through a correspondence of many years, had come out on a visit to India, and was going to meet the Āchārya in Rajputana. It was an excellent opportunity, and Vijaya Dharma Sūri resolved to utilize it in connection with a scheme he had been contemplating for promoting the revival of Jain culture in that part of India. This scheme was to hold a *Jain Literary Conference* on the occasion of the Professor's visit, and study the steps to be taken in order to remedy or at least mitigate the evils alluded to above. Jodhpur was chosen for the seat of the Conference, and there the delegates and visitors met in the beginning of March, 1914, under the patronage of the Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana and the presidency of Dr. Satiśchandra Vidyābhūṣaṇa of Calcutta, and discussed the means to be adopted for preserving and divulging the productions of the ancient Jain civilization from the stone inscriptions which lay buried under the débris of ruined temples to the manuscripts which are slowly but inexorably eaten up by white ants in dusty *bhandars* and ohstinately and superstitiously concealed from the eyes of students who would rescue them from ohlvion and destruction.¹ Though the Conference was not fecund of practical results, nor could it be expected to have been otherwise when it was to deal with a hackward and indifferent country

¹ The transactions of the Conference, together with papers contributed by Jain students from different parts of Europe and India, have been published by Abhaya Chanda Bhagavana Dasa Gandhi in a volume :
 जैनसाहित्यसंमेलन काव्यविवरण, Bhawnagar, 1916

like Marwar, yet the efforts of Vijaya Dharma Sūri were in the right direction, and the enthusiasm which he displayed in that connection was more that of a Western archaeologist and philologist than that of a Jain monk who is generally expected to care only for the strictly spiritual side of his particular religion

Leaving Jodhpur after the Conference, Vijaya Dharma Sūri proceeded to Osīya to visit the ancient Jain *tirtha*, and thence bent his way towards Godwar, a country which called his attention not only on account of the many ancient Jain temples with which she is scattered, but also on account of the unenlightened condition of her numerous Jain population. The *chaturmāsa* of that year was spent at Sivganj (near Eripura). When the rains were over, Vijaya Dharma Sūri resumed his peregrinations throughout the territory of Godwar, visiting practically every village from the five *tirthas* of Varkana, Nadol, Nadlai, Ghanerao, and Ranakpur to Kesriyaji and founding *pathaśālas* in several places, where they were most needed. Then, after a tour in Mewar which gave him a good scope for archaeological researches in connection with Jain temples and inscriptions, he went into Gujarat to satisfy his countrymen's desire to see him again amongst them and is now peregrinating in the villages of the plague-stricken Kathiyawar, still exercising his powerful influence to lead the people further on along the way to enlightenment and progress.

Now it remains for me rapidly to summarize the results of Vijaya Dharma Sūri's literary activity. The greatest monument which he will leave to posterity is a Series of Sanskrit and Prakrit works called the *Yaśovijaya Jaina Granthamālā*. This publication was started by him in Benares in 1904 for the purpose of rescuing from oblivion important Jain works which deserved to be made known and

its volumes have been distributed freely to all the principal libraries and colleges in India, and the oriental societies in Europe. The works have been edited with great care and accuracy, and the very favourable reception given in Europe to the collection is the best proof of its intrinsic value and its importance. So far 75 volumes have been published, and they include works embracing a very large range of subjects such as grammar, lexicography, logic, chronology, fable, poetry, etc. The publication, though on a smaller scale, has been compared to the famous *Kavyamala* of Bombay, and certainly is not inferior to it in accuracy.

The first original works composed by Vijaya Dharma Sūri were mostly of a polemic and propagandist nature. These were composed during his stay in Benares and in Calcutta with the special object of making the fundamental principles of Jainism favourably known and meeting the opposition raised against him by the Hindus, which often was dictated by ignorance and misunderstanding rather than by hatred and malevolence. One of these works, the *Ahimsādigdarśana*, has already been mentioned above. The others are the *Jainatattva digdarśana*, a summary exposition of the Jain philosophy which Vijaya Dharma Sūri read at the first Convention of Religions held in Calcutta in 1909, the *Jainaśikṣadigdarśana*, which he wrote on the occasion of the second Convention of Religions that was held at Prayaga in 1911, and the *Purusārthadigdarśana* and *Indriyaparajayadigdarśana*. All the above treatises are in Hindi and have had a large diffusion, each of them having run through several editions.

The work in which Vijaya Dharma Sūri first revealed himself as a philologist and an erudite critic, is his edition of the *Yogaśāstra* of Hema Chandra, published in the Bibliotheca Indica. The first fasciculus

of this edition was attacked in a rather unmerciful way by an Italian critic, Prof. F. Belloni-Filippi, in an article contributed to the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (Lxii, pp. 782-7). But in his rejoinder to the Italian Professor's criticism, published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1910), Vijaya Dharma Sūri displayed such a sound erudition and such a mastery of his subject that he was not only fully justified before the eyes of the world, but everyone was also convinced that the Āchārya had gone to work with all the care and scholarly method which is expected from an editor, and that he was the right man to undertake that publication.

In the year 1911, Vijaya Dharma Sūri started the *Jaina Śāsana*, a fortnightly paper, in Gujarati and Hindi, which is published at Bhawnagar. It is essentially a Jain organ, and it aims at spreading amongst the Jain community a better knowledge of their religion, and at the same time guiding them to further enlightenment and progress. Since the time of the issuing of the first number of the paper, for a period of four years uninterruptedly, Vijaya Dharma Sūri had been contributing to its columns a series of articles under the title of *Dharma Deśanā*, i.e. "religious instruction," in Gujarati. These have now been collected into a huge volume under the same title of *Dharma Deśanā*,¹ and they constitute a handy manual laying before the reader an easy and popular exposition of Jainism, conducted on the same simple lines which the Āchārya ordinarily follows in his public sermons. It is a book of very pleasant reading, just as the Āchārya's sermons are of pleasant hearing, and the very frequent quotations of Sanskrit and Prakrit verses with which the text is interspersed, and the anecdotes with which

the exposition is enlivened, greatly add to the attractiveness of the book.

These last years, Vijaya Dharma Sūri's predilection has been converging towards a new direction, whereby he has given a new proof of his great versatility. He has been taking interest in archaeological and historical researches in connection with Jainism, and has been collecting material, both manuscript and epigraphical, which I know from his disciples to be rich and valuable. Some results of this new tendency of his literary activity have already appeared. One is a monograph bearing the title *Devakulapātaka*, in which the Author has given a sketch of the history of Delwara, a small village in Mewar, about 17 miles to the north of Udaipur, which four or five centuries ago was a prosperous town, full of Jain temples. In appendix to this sketch, Vijaya Dharma has given the text of twenty-six inscriptions, which he has found partly amongst the ruins of the above-mentioned temples, and partly on consecrated images preserved locally. The monograph is especially noteworthy for the painstaking accuracy and the strict method with which it is written, and for the erudite notes with which it is illustrated. Another publication of an historical character is a series which the Āchārya has just inaugurated, under the title of *Aitiḥāsika Rāsa Saṃgraha*, for the publication of such Jain *rāsas*, in the vernaculars of Gujarat and Rajputana, as appear to possess some historical value. Two fasciculi of this series are already out, and others are in preparation, but as I have already given an idea of this publication in the *Indian Antiquary*,¹ I do not think it necessary to expand on its merits again here. Lastly, I may mention that Vijaya Dharma Sūri has just made arrangements to start in Agra a monthly journal in

Hindi, Gujarati, and English, to be devoted to articles on literature, history, archaeology, art, etc. It will be called *Dharmābhyaṅga*, and I understand that the first number is already in the Press.

L P TESSITORI

BIKANER

The 16th November, 1917